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frontiers

managing public lands for multiple use

Issue 23

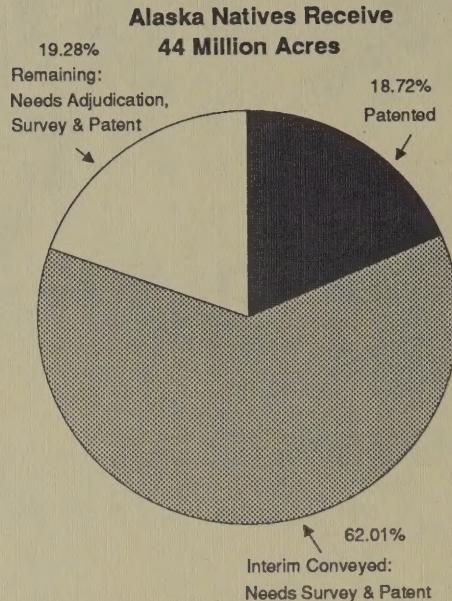
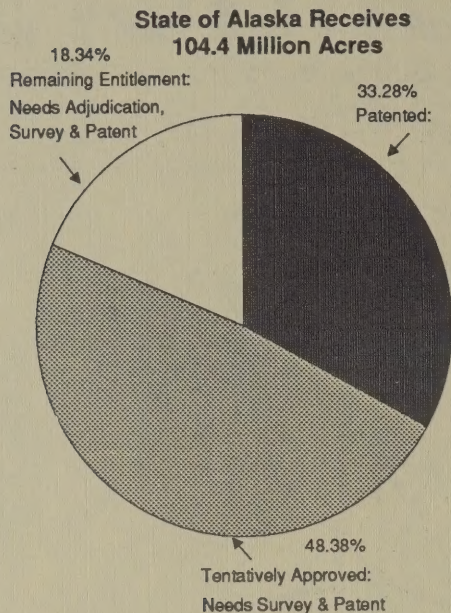
May 1990

**Fit for fighting:
BLM trains
for fire season**



u.s. department of the interior • bureau of land management

Now comes the tough part: issuing full patents



land by tentative approval. The BLM must survey and patent an additional 69.6 million acres to finish the job.

Other conveyances

BLM has processed 6,078 Native Allotments. There are still about 8,922 parcels left to be processed.

BLM has patented 6,405 other small parcels (such as homesites); 21,610 of these are still pending.

Over the years BLM has tried to get as much land as possible conveyed by interim processes, so the state and Native corporations could get legal title and begin to use it. But before the patent (the formal government deed) can be issued, the land must be surveyed.

This part of the project is slow going because, as Boden puts it, "Practically none of the land up here in Alaska has been surveyed—you don't have those markers on the ground that they have in the Lower 48 states."

Even now that BLM uses an elaborate planning and coordination process to schedule the field surveying, it takes from two to five years. Once that is done, state lands can be patented, but for Native corporations the work's still not finished until:

- Easements are reviewed by the BLM district office. Sometimes land for an easement must be acquired, the easement deleted, modified or re-routed. The state, the public and the corporations are all involved in this process.

- Navigability determinations are reviewed.

- The survey of inholdings is verified (to ensure clear title).

- The corporation is given the opportunity to review the draft documents.

At last, BLM issues the patent.

—JM

Once upon a time the federal government owned all 365.5 million acres of Alaska—"Seward's Folly," bought from the Russians in 1867, right?

Many years passed. Then one day in 1958, Congress passed the Alaska Statehood Act, giving the new State of Alaska 104.4 million acres of land for its development. And then Congress passed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) in 1971, giving Alaska Natives 44 million acres of land and creating Native corporations to manage the land.

Presto! The BLM was plunged into the world's biggest real estate disposal job, transferring 151 million acres of land to these groups and many individuals.

This much land is bigger than New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina combined. What a project!

BLM has been working at it for 30 years. How are we doing?

Wayne Boden, BLM deputy state director for conveyance management, says BLM has come a very long way in conveying land to the state and to Alaska Natives, but the biggest part of the job still lies ahead.

"Even though we have transferred title to about 80% of the land to the state and Native people, we have only patented 29 percent of the land," said Boden. "You could say our job is only 29 percent done. We won't be finished until we have produced patents for all the 151 million acres."

Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) entitlements

As of December 31, 1989, BLM has issued patents to 8.2 million acres of surveyed land for ANCSA Native corporations, and has interim-conveyed 27.3 million acres of unsurveyed land. Some 37.3 million acres of land must still be surveyed and patented before the job is complete.

State of Alaska

The BLM has also patented 34.8 million acres of surveyed land to the State of Alaska, and has conveyed 50.5 million acres of unsurveyed

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BLM firefighters get ready

Jump into spring training



All over the BLM buildings on Fort Wainwright at Fairbanks, Alaska, people are getting ready for the fire season. On the roads you pass fire fighters jogging. In the yards outside buildings, groups of fire fighters do push-ups and jumping jacks. Inside full classrooms, people intently watch their instructors. Spring training is going full force at BLM's Alaska Fire Service.

This spring the training staff at the Alaska Fire Service is performing the Herculean task of organizing 17 courses for about 360 employees from all Department of the Interior agencies, the State of Alaska, the U.S. Forest Service and Canadian fire fighting agencies.

Instructors also travel to villages throughout the northern half of the state to train another 150 to 200 emergency fire fighters. These courses teach new skills to old hands and newcomers alike.

Rookie smokejumpers must pass a three-week course that rivals military boot camp for toughness. The slightest mistake is cause to "drop for 25" pushups. Other smokejumpers attend emergency medical training for three weeks or

They'll need know-how, strength and endurance when they go out against wildfires in Alaska.

practice dropping cargo by parachute.

The hotshot crews and fire suppression specialists also go through two weeks or more of refresher training and additional skills courses. Each returning fire fighter attends at least a week of refresher training. For smokejumpers this means practice jumps and refresher instruction on how to exit from a plane and how to get out of a tree if you're hung up.

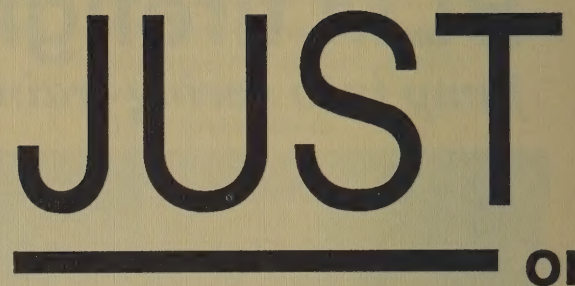
New dispatchers spend three weeks learning to operate the computer systems, studying the land laws and policies for Alaska, learning the types of aircraft and the aircraft regulations, learning what fire fighting forces are available and the policies for using them, learning about fire weather, learning how to communicate on a radio and how to

complete paperwork requirements, among other things. The success or failure of an attack on a fire often depends on the dispatcher's quick and informed decision about who and what to send to a fire.

Other courses teach safety, organization, timekeeping, intelligence gathering, helicopter operations, mixing and loading fire retardant, managing prescribed fires, and other skills.

Andy Anderson, operations manager for the training section, said, "We're trying to get them enough information about a particular job so they can go out and do it. Then they learn on the job".

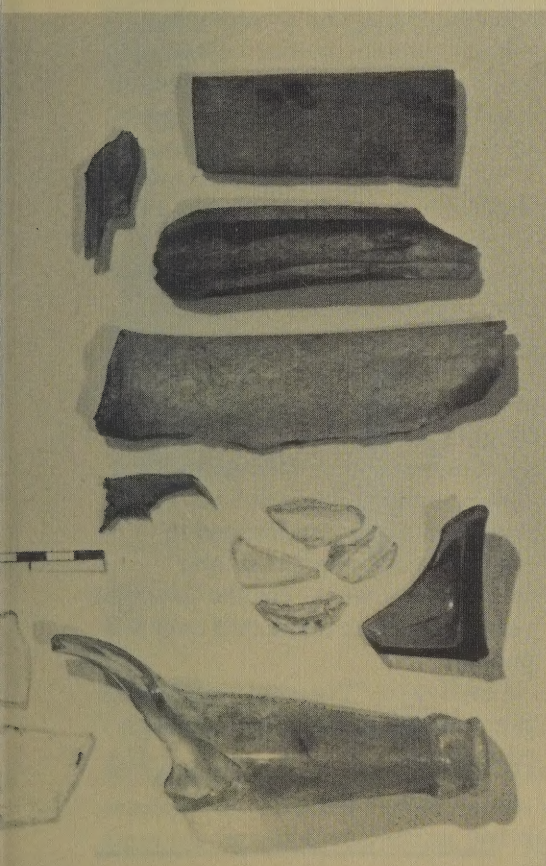
"We don't take all the credit," said Anderson about the huge scale of the effort. "We get assistance from other agencies. It's an interagency effort."
—SM



JUNK

it?

At Sourdough Camp-
archaeologists have found
details about the place.



mpground reveals details of life there in the
na fragments dating from 1910-1950; moose
e; medicine bottle fragments, 1940-60's; beer
f modern amber beer bottle, probably 1980's.

is an early telegraph line to be
interpreted for its significance to yet
another stage in Alaska history.

BLM plans to install eye-catching
informational displays and photo-
graphs in kiosks along a handi-
capped-accessible trail system
throughout the campground area.
However, these improvements will

come in a later phase of develop-
ment. The interpretive signing will
be the "finishing touches" on the
campground; first priority for the
1990 construction season will be to
improve the access bridge and boat
ramp.

Managing cultural resource sites
through special on-site interpreta-
tion is a new direction in BLM and
will also be planned for other BLM
sites in Alaska.

"By educating the public about the
importance of such sites as the ruins
of relatively recent cabins, we hope
that people will learn to appreciate
that such remains from even our
recent past are important and
should not be destroyed by the
illegal collection of artifacts or
deliberate vandalism," says King.

—EB

BLM hosts conference

BLM archaeologists recently
hosted the 17th Annual Meeting of
the Alaska Anthropological
Association in Fairbanks.

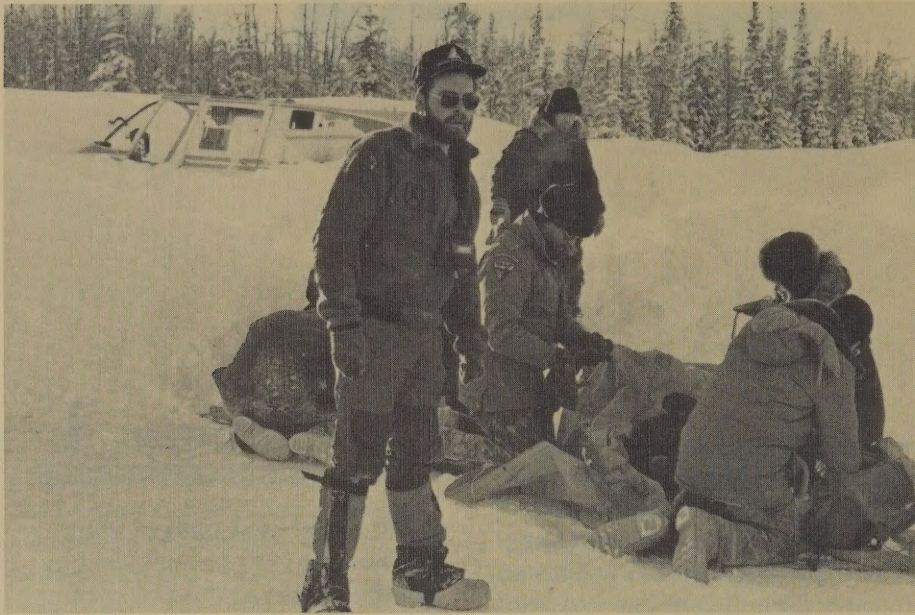
BLM archaeologists Bob King
and Julia Steele gave papers,
King's on the history of tin cans
in Alaska; and Steele's on trade,
settlement and subsistence on the
Kaltag Portage; and three rock
shelters near Haines. King also
organized and chaired a sympo-
sium on historical archaeology in
Alaska.

BLM's John Cook headed the
project, assisted by Michael
Kunz, Lee Douthit and Howard
Smith.



Larry Kajdan digs up pottery shard from an old cabin site at Sourdough.

Learning cold weather survival



Instructor Brian Horner helps students give first aid to a "crash victim."

In the early morning grey, a handful of tired people huddle around a fire. They're taking participants of an arctic survival course, and the fire brings momentary relief from sleeping in cramped snow shelters.

This overnight session concludes the training given by the Bureau of Land Management natural resource specialist Jack Lewis and University of Alaska survival instructor Brian Horner. The classroom has been the BLM's Campbell Tract, a 700-acre semi-wilderness area in Anchorage.

Temperatures of -10 degrees and waist-high snow make for great realism.

In the early morning light, they contemplate the effectiveness of the shelters they'd built out of spruce boughs, rope and snow.

BLM employee Martin Hansen comments "one of the first things they teach you to do when you're outdoors is to drink fluids. So we drank and drank. As a result, there wasn't much sleeping done."

The day before, they'd studied wilderness first aid.

For this, a simulated helicopter crash proved to be a challenge for most of dozen participants in the class. As a group, the class pulled two classmates from a smoking shell of a helicopter. Their goal was to successfully rescue and administer first aid to their victims. BLM employee Mushovic, who played a victim says, "We missed doing some things due to our haste and excitement. The best thing is to slow down and think."

Horner agrees. "Your survival depends on you, what you know and how you react."

Setting flares and skinning live rabbits got the attention of many, but it was the survival principles taught which had the most impact for Mushovic.

"The training makes you think. It's good to know how to start a fire with flashlight batteries but I thought the techniques were secondary to how your attitude about survival can make a difference."

This course is one of many survival, outdoor and aquatic courses taught by Lewis and Horner. Their solid reputation and the excitement they bring to their classes have made them in great demand to instruct both government and private employees. For the last eight years, they have instructed over 400 people.

Lewis says, "We want people to be prepared for the outdoors through education."
—DA

BLM biologists present inventory data

by Oonagh M. Springer

Two biologists from BLM's Kobuk District office presented their research at the 1990 conference of the western and northwestern sections of The Wildlife Society in Sparks, Nevada. Scott R. Robinson gave a progress report, "Moose Habitat Inventory and Enhancement in BLM's Kobuk District," an interagency study scheduled for completion in 1994. Robinson says, "moose are a harvestable resource for both recreation and subsistence users. This survey represents an inexpensive snapshot of what's out there at any particular place and time."

Randi R. Anderson, a cooperative education student, spoke about another ongoing study, "Waterfowl Inven-

tory in the Kobuk District." For this research she counted broods on the ground to estimate waterfowl production in two areas in western Alaska, the Pah River Flats and McCarthy's Marsh, both on the Seward Peninsula. These areas were chosen because they represent taiga and tundra habitats.

The conference concerned wildlife management throughout the Pacific Rim. Topics varied from environmental contaminants to biodiversity, wildlife diseases, wetlands, and forest wildlife.

Anderson commented, "we don't yet see the problems that the Lower 48 have, but we manage a fragile habitat and can learn from their mistakes."

Oonagh M. Springer is a coop-student working with the BLM public affairs staff in Fairbanks.

Suzuki lends BLM wheels for rangers



BLM's Don Runberg and Ranger Randy Tracy accept the keys for new all-terrain vehicles from Karen Hill, owner-manager of Northern Power Sports and her son Colby Hill, the co-manager. The Hills had received the machines from the Suzuki Corporation, put them together, and serviced them for the transfer to BLM.

Don Runberg, former manager of the BLM Steese/White Mountains district office, was so happy to get the keys he hopped onto the shiny new Suzuki Quad II four-wheeler for a short tour around the parking lot. Moments before, he and Randy Tracy, the district ranger, had just received safety and operating instructions on two all-terrain vehicles that BLM will use in northern Alaska for the next two years.

To Runberg, in this era of declining budgets, the most exciting aspect of the transaction was that the vehicles were free.

The American Suzuki Motor Corporation, acting in the spirit of Take Pride in America, has loaned the four-wheelers to the district for the next two years. The BLM will use the machines for wildlife and resource protection work, for off-road vehicle evaluation and enforcement, for field inventories and for

habitat enhancement projects.

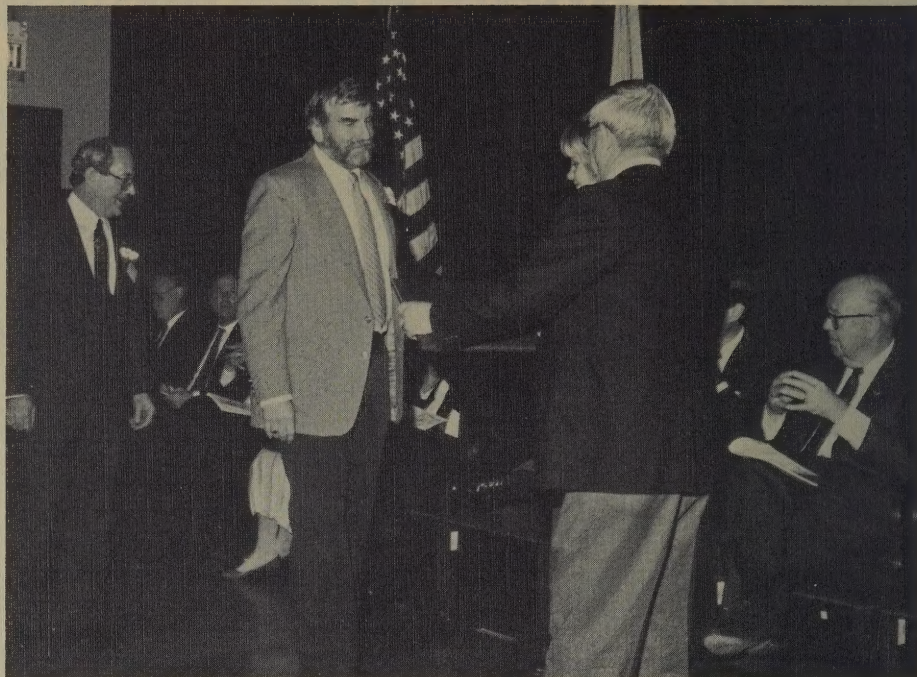
The American Suzuki Motor Corporation will provide general maintenance for the vehicles through Northern Power Sports. BLM will send the company periodic reports on the type of work being done, the terrain being covered, and the machines' overall performance.

—SDW

After evaluating some 290 rivers, BLM's planning staff has designated thirteen water bodies in south-central Alaska eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. These are: Maclaren River, two segments of the Susitna River, Dickey Lake West System, Hungry Hollow Creek, Monsoon Creek and Lake, Victor Creek, Tyone River, West Fork Gulkana River, Fish Lake System, East Fork Chistochina River, Tonsina River and Upper Middle Fork Gulkana River. For more information or to comment, call Lynette Nakazawa at (907) 271-5546 or K J Mushovic at (907) 822-3217 before April 30.



Work begins July 15 on reconstructing BLM's Sourdough Creek Campground, Mile 147.5 on the Richardson Highway. A new bridge and access road will be built. The campground will stay open except for a possible 5-day period after August 15. For more information call the Glennallen district office, (907) 822-3218.



Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan, Jr., right, presents the first Secretarial Stewardship Award to two Alaska BLM employees, Robert Jones of Anchorage (left) and Thomas Dean of Fairbanks in Washington, D.C., in January. This prestigious award was established by Lujan to recognize outstanding contributions in natural resource stewardship. Lujan gave them the award for their work in creating the Resource Apprenticeship Program for Students (RAPS). He praised the RAPS program for "combining conservation work with environmental and resource education for our youth."



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